UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/343
23 April 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 20 APRIL 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ZIMBABWE TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a statement by His Excellency Cde. Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe and current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, on the successful deployment of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA) (see annex).

I would be most grateful if you could have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Machivenyika Tobias MAPURANGA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Statement by the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe and Chairman of the Organization of African Unity on the occasion of the deployment of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic

On behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Government and people of Zimbabwe and on my own behalf, I wish to commend the United Nations Security Council for the important decision it has taken to deploy a 1,350-personnel United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA) to replace the outgoing Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB). We welcome the fact that the United Nations has assumed its rightful role under the Charter of the United Nations. I thank all those Member States of the United Nations who have made MINURCA possible by contributing to it the requisite human, material, financial and logistical support.

In welcoming MINURCA, I wish to take this opportunity to express my most sincere appreciation to the OAU member States, namely, Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Mali, Senegal and Togo, for the indispensable role they played in MISAB. The fact that relative peace and tranquillity is prevailing in the Central African Republic is an eloquent testimony of the critical role that MISAB played in arresting the escalation of conflict and averting the risk of war in that country. MISAB certainly is yet another shining example of Africans seeking to solve African problems through subregional and regional efforts at conflict prevention, management and resolution.

The task of restoring peace in the Central African Republic would have been nigh impossible without the generous financial, material and logistical support provided by the French Government to enable MISAB to fulfil its objectives. We commend the Government and people of France for this and for their continued support to and involvement in the United Nations mission.

MINURCA certainly has a pivotal role to play in maintaining peace and stability in the Central African Republic and thereby create conditions conducive to the holding of elections in September 1998. I wish to note, in this context, that President Ange-Félix Patasse has requested the United Nations Security Council, through the Secretary-General of the United Nations, that the United Nations Force be maintained in that country until presidential elections are held next year. It is my hope that the Security Council will give sympathetic consideration to this request.